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ABSTRACT

This document is one of a series of business education position papers/curriculum guides developed for high schools in Connecticut to demonstrate that business education courses can be used as part of an integrated academic/vocational curriculum. The guide is organized into the following six sections: (1) business department philosophy; (2) course philosophy for business communications; (3) five course goals; (4) student outcomes or competencies in reading, writing, speaking and listening, technology of communications, and human relations skills; (5) 30 methods of assessment of student outcomes; and (6) a list of 12 references to books, magazines, and films used to prepare the guide. (KC)

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CROSS ACADEMIC CREDIT
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

FINAL REPORT

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PREPARED FOR

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ADULT EDUCATION
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DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

The Business Education program, an integral part of a comprehensive secondary school curriculum, is designed to encompass life application skills: basic business, economic, and business administration education; college preparation; and vocational preparation. A business curriculum is for students who are preparing to enter the work force after graduation, a four-year college/university, or a two-year college/technical school. Course offerings focus on instruction in economic education, initial job preparation, and all areas of communication--reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computing. Computer education should be an integral part of the program, and computer applications should be integrated into all courses.

Therefore, **WE BELIEVE THAT BUSINESS EDUCATION--**

1. Has a responsibility to help all high school students to develop business, economic, and computer literacy.

2. Must provide needed leadership experiences through its student organizations.

3. Must provide occupational preparation for those students who will enter the work force upon completing high school.

4. Provides courses which should be accepted as meeting specific general education high school graduation requirements.

5. Provides courses which should be recognized as appropriate private electives for college-bound students and should be accepted by colleges and universities as meeting part of their entrance requirements.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY

This we believe about the teaching of *Business Communications*:

Employers are demanding higher levels of skill in business communication because every function in the business world depends upon effective communication. While many variations exist in definitions of business communication, the following serves as the premise for this statement: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IS THE INTERCHANGE OF VERBAL AND NONVERBAL INFORMATION WITHIN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.

Students Need a solid educational foundation in the total communication process to function effectively in their professional and personal lives. This foundation can be achieved through separate business communication courses and/or units in other business courses.

WE BELIEVE THAT the best way of achieving this foundation is to offer separate business communication courses taught by business teachers. In addition to separate courses, business communication instruction should be integrated throughout the business curriculum.

WE BELIEVE THAT instruction should address the development of skills in all phases of business communication including writing, listening, speaking, reading, and interpreting nonverbal cues.

WE BELIEVE THAT content areas at the introductory level of instruction in business communication should include:

- Communication theory
- Basic language skills, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Reading comprehension
- Written communication, such as letters, memorandums, reports, resumes, and minutes.
- Oral communication, such as telephone, dictation, and conference techniques.
- Interpersonal communication, such as listening, inter-viewing and interpreting nonverbal cues.
- Problem solving and decision making.

WE BELIEVE THAT at the advanced level of instruction in business communication students should further develop and refine those skills related to the content areas identified above.

IN ADDITION, WE BELIEVE THAT students should:

- Understand organizational theory
- Be able to select appropriate media and channels for communication
- Know how to evaluate their own communication efforts
- Develop reference/research skills utilizing business and industry resource materials.

WE BELIEVE THAT the development of communication skills should be included in all instruction preparing students for the business world.

WE BELIEVE THAT business educators are uniquely qualified and have a responsibility to teach business communication skills. In addition to their specialized educational background, business educators maintain an awareness of the changing needs of business through:

- o Business advisory committees
- o Business internships
- o Cooperative office education programs
- o Professional organizations in education and business
- o Ongoing business and education seminars and workshops
- o Requests from business for consulting services.

WE BELIEVE THAT business educators have an opportunity and a responsibility to use their expertise in helping to solve communication problems in business and industry through training programs or other consulting arrangements.

WE BELIEVE THAT when business communication is taught as a separate course, it should be recognized as meeting one of the Language Arts/English graduation requirements.

WE BELIEVE THAT BUSINESS EDUCATORS MUST ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

<Above statement by Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education>

People in business spend up to 80 percent of their time in some form of communication using either the spoken or the written word. Research studies show the importance of communication skills in business, as measured by the amount of time spent in communicating and by the high value assigned to communication ability by employers. There is no doubt that the successful business employee knows how to communicate effectively, and young people who hope to be successful in business must be helped to see the importance of acquiring high-level communication skills as they ready themselves for the world of work.

Many high schools offer a course commonly titled Business English, which emphasizes basic English skills, especially as related to business letter writing. These skills are necessary in the business world, but a course that approaches communication in a more comprehensive manner is to be preferred, and one can see a shift to an offering frequently titled Business Communication, which is usually available to eleventh or twelfth graders.

Communications is a course offered to develop and refine writing and oral communication, logical thinking, and decision-making skills. Effectiveness in human relations and management, as well as critical thinking skills, are developed.

COURSE GOALS

At the end of a course in Business Communications, the student will demonstrate competency in:

1. Reading and understanding printed materials.

2. Writing and computing.

3. Speaking and listening.

4. The technology of communications.

5. Human relations skills.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

The student will demonstrate mastery of Reading skills by:

1. reading a novel or short story and reporting on it either in writing or orally
2. reading magazine or newspaper articles and summarizing them either orally or in writing.
3. analyzing and discussing the different purposes of written materials.
4. identifying and explaining the theme, setting and characters in novels.

The student will demonstrate mastery of Writing skills by:

1. composing letters and other business documents.
2. editing prepared copy.
3. composing routine letters using a word processor.
4. creating and using an outline.
5. analyzing and responding to fiction and non-fiction writing.
6. using appropriate vocabulary, grammar and style in all written communications.

The student will demonstrate mastery of Speaking and Listening skills by:

1. developing self-confidence through practice in talking to a group.
2. utilizing effective speech techniques.
3. preparing and delivering a demonstration and speech.
4. analyzing and responding to the spoken word.
5. develop sensitivity to misuse of language.

The student will demonstrate mastery of the Technology of Communications by:

1. using word processing software to prepare written correspondence.
2. using external data bases to research business related topics.
3. describing the purpose and operation of a facsimile machine.
4. using telecommunications software.
5. preparing a document using effective layout techniques on desktop publishing software.

The student will demonstrate mastery of Human Relations skills by:

1. role playing the interaction between employees.
2. studying human relations case histories and problem solving.
3. use logical thinking in business procedures.
4. identify barriers to good communication.

STUDENT OUTCOME/ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1. Given a newspaper or magazine article of 500 words or less, the student will identify and summarize in his/her own words the main and subordinate ideas in the article.

2. Given a paragraph of at least 100 words in length, the student will summarize orally or in writing the writer's point of view, tone, meaning, and ideas.

3. Given an assignment of reviewing several examples of printed materials (i.e., newspaper, magazine, book, media), the student will explain orally or in writing the different purposes and methods of writing for the reader, be able to note the details and facts of that writing, and be able to separate his/her personal opinions and assumptions from the writer's.

4. Given an assignment to keep a personal record of newly acquired business words complete with definitions, the student will develop and maintain a personal word list.

5. Given a book, the student will read the text and then summarize the general theme in a one-paragraph statement listing at least five major points.

6. Given a book, the student will read the book and report orally the major points in brief statements responding to all questions from the floor.

7. Given access to a library of business-related books, the student will read from such reference developing an awareness of the effects of business, both positive and negative upon people, our culture, and our value system listing at least one point from each.

8. Given an assignment to select a favorite business writer, the student will call upon his/her experience in having done extensive reading, make the selection, and prepare either a written or oral report indicting why this particular selection was made.

9. Given an assignment to read and analyze advertising statements, the student will review a wide variety of advertisements and give an oral report of several samples using propaganda techniques or making untrue or misleading statements.

10. Given an oral business message including numbers, the student will write or print a copy of the message legibly.

11. Given an employment application requiring both printed and handwritten information, the student will follow the directions and complete the application form legibly and accurately.

12. Given several sample sentences including introductory phrase, a nonrestrictive clause, items in a series, and prepositional phrase, the student will insert the required commas.

13. Given several sample sentences including one or more of the following: omission of connecting word, stand-alone introductory clause, enumeration, series, the student will insert the required semicolon(s).

14. Given several sample sentences including one or more of the following: illustration, quotation, enumeration, introductory clause, the student will insert the required colon(s).

15. Given several sample sentences including one or more of the following: sentence ending with question mark, period, exclamation point and/or use of semi-colon, the student will insert the required quotation marks.

16. Given several sample sentences including one or more of the following: contraction of word or figure; possessive; plural of letter, figure or word; and verb form of letter or unusual word, the student will insert the required apostrophe.

17. Given several sentences with words that could or could not be capitalized, including one or more of the following: personal title, business department, proper name, family title, trade name, tax, numbered item, direction, nation, race, language, the student will demonstrate knowledge of capitalization.

18. Given several sentences with words that could or could not be divided, including one or more of the following: double letters, vowels, one syllable, prefix, suffix, proper name, date, contraction, the student will demonstrate word division knowledge.

19. Given a vocabulary list, student will demonstrate knowledge of the meanings by using the words appropriately.

20. Given this same vocabulary list, the student will demonstrate the ability to spell the words correctly.

21. Given an assignment to write a short paper on a topic of the instructor's choosing, the student will brainstorm ideas about that topic; organize, select, and relate those ideas into outline form; and present them to the satisfaction of the instructor.

22. Following the outline developed above, the student will develop that outline into coherent paragraphs using standard English sentences with correct sentence structure, verb forms, plural forms, word choice, and other mechanics of writing with complete accuracy.

23. Given a writing assignment requiring the use of reference materials, the student will gather information suitable for the purpose, using a dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, and other resources citing at least five references.

24. Given a list of topics or a role-playing situation, the student will converse spontaneously with another student using standard pronunciation, diction, vocabulary, and grammar.

25. After listening to a three-minute oral presentation, the student will answer related objective questions concerning the content completely and accurately.

26. Given oral instructions for completing a project, the student will demonstrate concentration, distraction reduction, response to the speaker, and notetaking abilities by following the instructions exactly.

27. Given an assignment to give oral directions to an individual on how to get to a business located within the community, the student will give the directions clearly and accurately, including answering follow-up questions.

28. Given a current business-related topic, the student will initiate and develop ideas about that topic, select and organize related ideas, and present these ideas during the discussion in a clear and effective manner.

29. Given the assignment to make a three-minute oral presentation before the class, the student will make the presentation demonstrating a controlled voice, speaking correctly in standard English, expressing ideas clearly and concisely, and answering questions coherently.

30. Given an assignment to listen to a speaker, the student will critique the presentation identifying the positive and negative techniques used.

MATERIALS LIST

Business Communication, 2nd Edition, Himstreet et al, Glencoe Publishing Co., California.

Business Communications Activity Book, 2nd Edition, Himstreet et al, Glencoe Publishing Co., California.

A Doll's House, Ibsen.

Death of a Salesman, Miller.

Raisin in the Sun, Hansbury.

Working, Turkel.

Various biographies of business people.

Forbes magazine.

Business Week magazine.

Films: "A Place in the Sun", "Working Girl", "Wall Street".